

X/13 E/W - BRANDT: INVASION WILL NOT STOP REFORM IMPULSE (RELEADS CN 7)

MUNICH, SEPT 5 (GND/MACDONALD) - WEST GERMAN FOREIGN MINISTER WILLY BRANDT SAID IN AN INTERVIEW PUBLISHED TODAY THAT THE SOVIET INVASION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA WAS UNLIKELY TO HALT THE TREND TOWARDS THE DEMOCRATIC REFORM OF COMMUNISM IN EAST EUROPE.

IN THE INTERVIEW, GIVEN TO THE HAMBURG NEWSPAPER DIE WELT, THE FOREIGN MINISTER DECLARED THAT THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC WOULD CONTINUE ITS EASTERN POLICY OF RELAXATION AND UNDERSTANDING DESPITE SOVIET ATTACKS ON IT.

HE ALSO CATEGORICALLY DENIED THE EAST GERMAN CLAIM THAT HE HAD A SECRET MEETING WITH CZECHOSLOVAK FOREIGN MINISTER JIRI HAJEK IN VIENNA JUNE 10.

"I REGRET THAT I HAVE NEVER SEEN MR. HAJEK IN MY LIFE, NEITHER AS LONG AS HE WAS IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA NOR SINCE HE HAS BEEN STAYING OUTSIDE THE BORDERS OF HIS COUNTRY," BRANDT SAID.

THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID THERE WAS NOPT NO ALTERNATIVE TO THE POLICY OF PEACEFUL UNDERSTANDING IN EUROPE, WHICH LAY IN THE INTERESTS OF THE EUROPEAN PEOPLES AND WOULD WIN THROUGH IN THE LONG RUN.

"PARTICULARLY INTERESTING APPEAR TO ME THE CONSEQUENCES (OF THE INVASION) FOR POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE EAST EUROPEAN STATES AND ESPECIALLY IN THE SOVIET UNION ITSELF," HE TOLD THE PAPER.

"SO FAR AS WE KNOW TODAY, ONE OF THE MAIN REASONS FOR THE INVASION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA BY THE SOVIET UNION AND THE OTHER INTERVENTIONISTS WAS THE FEAR THAT THE LIBERALISATION, THE DEMOCRATISING EFFORTS OF REFORM COMMUNISM, SO STRONGLY SUPPORTED BY THE CZECHOSLOVAK PEOPLE, COULD BE INFECTIOUS AND ATTRACTIVE FOR THE PEOPLE IN THE NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES, INCLUDING THE GDR AND THE SOVIET UNION. (MORE) MBW/HE 1203/68

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